

# AN ORATION

DELIVERED

IN THE CHURCH OF THE IRISH COLLEGE SAINT AGATHA, ROME,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SOLEMN CELEBRATION,  
OF THE FIRST CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF

## DANIEL O'CONNELL

ON THE 5<sup>th</sup> OF AUGUST, 1875

BY

## MONSIGNOR ANIVITTI

PRIVATE CHAPLAIN TO HIS HOLINESS

## PIUS IX.

OFFICIAL OF THE VICARIATE OF ROME,  
PROFESSOR OF SACRED ELOQUENCE  
IN THE ROMAN SEMINARY ETC.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH FROM THE ITALIAN

BY W. MAZIERE BRADY

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ROME

AT THE PRINT. OFF. OF THE S. C. DE PROP. FIDE  
1875.



B  
O 1782

TO HIS EMINENCE

CARDINAL ALEXANDER FRANCHI

PREFECT OF THE SACRED CONGREGATION

FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH

THIS EULOGIUM RECITED IN PRESENCE

OF HIS EMINENCE

IN THE CHURCH OF THE IRISH COLLEGE

ON OCCASION OF THE FIRST CENTENARY OF

DANIEL O'CONNELL

IS WITH KIND PERMISSION

DEDICATED.

P 59346



EULOGIUM  
UPON  
DANIEL O'CONNELL  
DELIVERED IN ROME ON THE 5<sup>th</sup> OF AUGUST 1875,  
BEING THE CENTENARY OF HIS BIRTHDAY.

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We are this day united together, in spirit and purpose, with all that is honest and Catholic in Ireland, in England, in Scotland, in America, and in the Civilized Universe. We are assembled in this place to celebrate with pious joy the memorable date, now a century old, of the fortunate birth of a man, a father rather than son, to the heroic nation of Erin, and whose name, written in indelible characters by the hand of justice and gratitude, has been inscribed in the annals of his country, of humanity and of the Church.

All hail to the glorious light, though after the lapse of a century, of that most

auspicious day, in which Daniel O'Connell was born, but for far higher than worldly enterprises and conquests.

In two places, to say the truth, this centenarian commemoration has claims to be celebrated with singular solemnity. First of all, there is the place where he was born, where the mortal remains of this greatest of Irishmen lie, and where he still lives in the lasting benefits which he obtained for Ireland. Next, there is Rome as the second place where these public honours are due to him. Rome, whose faith he championed by word and deed. Rome, whose authority was always his guide in every difficult enterprise, in all his designs and religious belief. Rome, whose splendour was for him a charm to be contemplated from afar, and which was the ultimate aim, though he never reached it, of his earthly pilgrimage, as it always had been the subject of his heavenward aspirations. Rome, in fine, though God ordained that he should die on Ligurian shores, half way on his journey to the eternal city, which was destined to receive and to hold, as it were in pledge of

his perpetual affection, as it does this day, the gift of his magnanimous heart.

And now upon this auspicious day, open to me this Urn, ye Guardian Angels of Ireland, who for well nigh ten lustrums have guarded it with anxiety and love ! Today, yes, be it given us to see, to salute, and I would say to interrogate this Heart; for from it alone can we fully apprehend the compendious symbol of those virtues which together form the Christian and citizen grandeur of our hero.

If this be not vouchsafed, let us resort to the simple language of verity, and consult the actual facts of his life. Putting apart all other merits, and they are no mean ones, of the glorious political career of O'Connell, it seems always, but to day especially, worth our while to study the solidity, the fulness, the ardour, of his Catholic sentiments, and to notice in him, whose birth was a gift from Providence to the world, the living image of a Catholic citizen.

In two periods, especially, in the history of the world, it seemed impossible to discover united in one single subject the qua-

lities of the true Christian and of the statesman, or man of public cares. The first time was when idolatrous and pagan society tried in every part of the world, but chiefly in Rome, by all the apparatus of terror and violence, to bar the progress of the Church, which, descending from Golgotha, was moving by means of miracles, to take her place in the universal life of peoples and of nations. The second time was when the faith of the Nazarene had been already identified with the social life of the redeemed world, and when its enemies tried to separate the Divine from every thing human, in order to oppress the Divine when so separated, and, as far as possible, to annihilate it. But in both these struggles, the first of which was directed to impede, the second to repress its progress, Religion possessed champions drawn from the ranks of the Christian laity, who either gained for the Church her primary right of existence and of beneficent action, at the price, when necessary, of their blood unresistingly shed in testimony of the truth, or who powerfully defended her already recognized rights,

by the sole force of courage and of truth, in order not to see her unjustly proscribed; and that they did before the very tribunals of those who would have proscribed her.

Now, among the principal lay champions of the social rights of the Church, we ought to record with enthusiasm men like Justinus, Arnobius, Minutius, Lactantius, Victorinus, Cassiodorus, or Boetius, those fearless Christian athletes, who being irreprehensible in life, as well as eminent for dignity and learning, were the first to raise, before the thrones of the Cesars or of other tyrants not less perverse, their free voice in behalf of their massacred brethren, and were the first to say, even in the face of blind paganism, a Christian can be a citizen of this world, as well as a citizen of Heaven.

But among the laymen, who succeeded to such noble examples, and who deserve in modern times our respect, regard and veneration, we know not any one in this unjust reaction of Christian society against the Church of Jesus Christ, who was so distinguished in the noble array, as he whom

now we commemorate. S. Paul of the Cross had spent at the foot of the Tabernacle and Crucifix, forty years of prayer for the conversion of England, when, as one of the modes of answering the supplications of the Saint, heaven granted the birth of a man who wonderfully contributed to remove the permanent obstacles in England to the conversion of the people from Anglicanism, besides serving in natural ways the designs of Divine Grace in his religious work, as defender of his country.

And this man was Daniel O'Connell. At a time when the furies of hell in human forms, like unto the deluded judges of the inviolate Susanna, were dragging down religion even unto social death, God raised up the spirit, not of a new prophet, but of a new Daniel, marvellous for his moral ascendancy over his fellow citizens and their adversaries, who were compelled to retrace their steps and to change the iniquitous opinions which had till then prevailed, into luminous proofs in favor of the cause of innocence.

But mark attentively. To this work he applied nothing save a right belief, and

a mode of living, speaking and acting, such as became a pious and loyal Catholic, thus presenting a direct antithesis to those who make patriotism a veil for the foul atheism of their minds, heart and conduct.

It is especially in the more elevated ranks of society that we find Catholics of the so called philosophic stamp, besides others who are merely poetical, the first being simply in search of an ideal system, the others seeking for the gratification of an æsthetic passion for the beautiful and sublime. There are also Catholics, who aim solely at utilitarianism in politics, and there are others again, who call themselves Catholics, but who are no more Catholics than the hypocritical Pharisees were disciples of the Nazarene. And what is more, we have pretended liberal and progressive Catholics, whose aims are irreconcileable with the immutability and authority of the Faith; just as today also we have Catholics so stolid as to term themselves *Old Catholics*, and to separate themselves from that Church which never grows old, but which lives a perpetual youth in the immortality of its Divine founder.

To none of these classes of too imperfect, or of absolutely false Catholics, did the name of that valorous Catholic belong, whose appearance in the world we this day celebrate, an appearance which occurred in times which had the most pressing need of such an example of faith and patriotism.

And although it be impossible fully to estimate the sound, perfect and extended Christian sentiments of this grand politician, of this glorious defender of the social rights of religion properly so called, yet consider, I pray you, that he was a Catholic of that kind, which, except in Spain in past epochs, has had no parallel among the nations of the world. O'Connell was a Catholic after the stamp of the Catholicism of Ireland. Those converted by the Apostolic power of the great S. Patrick, the native inhabitants, not of an Island of Christians simply, but of an Island of Saints, for such did Ireland become from the time of its conversion, are in respect to Catholic convictions and the life of the pure and uncorrupted Faith, such as at one time the Greeks and Romans were in respect to country. To the

intrinsic strength and inherent inflexibility of the divinely instituted Church of Christ, of which the sons of Ireland are children, there is added an especial firmness of their own and a peculiar loyalty to their Catholic profession. We who actually bewail the folly of a people, who, fed by vain promises of temporal felicity, miserably repeat the apostacies of Israel, we I say, have good cause to admire in amazement an entire nation, which endured three centuries of legal martyrdom, which without the death and carnage of the scaffold and executioner, deprived the people of its chief civil rights, in order to deprive them, if possible, of the benefits of their religion. Gentlemen, one such nation was Ireland. But from that very nation, which did not succumb to such a severe and long continued ordeal, of which its enemies themselves grew weary, from that same nation, I say, arose the man destined to be the model of a Catholic citizen. For this very reason, then, O'Connell ought to have been, nay was, a Christian of pure blood. His mind was indomitable in his Catholic sentiments, like the people he repre-

sented. Yes: You will say he was Catholic not only by the inviolate and unshaken faith of Ireland, but inasmuch as he had to sustain the cause and the rights of such a people, he had also, in a certain way to collect together within his own heart all the substance, the vigour, and the invincibility of the faith of Ireland.

But the Irish Faith is such as it appears and is, because it is the Faith uncontaminated and indistructable of the Church of Rome. All the nations which have, to their misfortune, divorced themselves from Rome, have ended with the loss of all the Faith, or at least with the loss of all that essential unitive force, which has no beginning save from the fundamental rock which is the son of Jonas, nor can be enjoyed save in proportion as the spiritual edifice of believing nations is based upon this mystic rock; and unless to Peter is yielded faith and obedience, and unless beneath the banner of the sacred keys be placed in security the intellect, the heart, the honesty of life and the mode of the true worship of God. This heroic Irishman, in his profession of Catholicism,

was Roman *par excellence*. Rare it is to find at that side of the Alps so explicit, so to speak, and so inclusive a subjection of all the duties of the Catholic towards the Apostolic See, or to find such an adhesion as that which O'Connell practised and manifested towards Rome, in spite of all the opposition he met with from the ordinary and extraordinary revilers and contemners of Popery, for that is the term contemptuously applied to the inner and exterior union of the faithful to the Roman Pontiff, as such, in doctrine and in practise. Yes. O'Connell was a *Papist*. This sounds among Anglicans like those grotesque or ridiculous titles, by which even amongst us in these latter years sectarian audacity presumes to insult our religious fidelity, our conscientious obedience to the Vicar of Jesus Christ. « I am a *Papist*, he responded to a miserable mocker » of this his Roman faith; I am a Papist » and I glory in the fact. Papist means » that my faith through an uninterrupted suc- » cession of Popes, ascends to Jesus Christ; » whereas your faith ascends no farther » than to Luther and Calvin, Henry VIII

» and Elizabeth. Yes: I am a Papist. And if  
» you had a spark of sense, you would un-  
» derstand that in matter of religion, it  
» were better to depend upon the Pope,  
» than upon the King, upon the tiara rather  
» than the Crown, upon the surplice rather  
» than the petticoat, upon Councils of ec-  
» clesiastics, rather than on Assemblies of  
» laymen. Blush then for yourself, for ha-  
» ving neither true faith nor intelligence,  
» and be silent! »

But if fools and unbelievers were forced to be silent in his presence, let not O'Connell himself be silent among us in ever revealing to Europe, to the world, to the ages, that such a faith as his, is much to be desired by many others, who pretend to believe, or perhaps do believe, that by rising against the Church, which is the pillar and support of truth, they will give regeneration to the universe and bestow freedom of thought upon humanity! Listen to another new, and nobler declaration, not made in my words but in his own, and written by his hand in conformity with the ideas of his beautiful mind, and in har-

mony with his truly Christian conduct. « I  
» venerate in every point the authority of  
» the Holy See. I fairly hope (for I know  
» myself) that there is not a single person  
» in the Church, who more sincerely than  
» myself makes, with all the heart, to the  
» Church that submission, in the largest ac-  
» ceptation of the word, which the Church  
» demands from her children. I have never  
» said, nor will I ever say, a single word  
» which is not subjected to Her in profound-  
» est obedience. I am heartily attached to  
» the centre of unity, with the most ardent  
» desire never to be separated from it,  
» either in thought, in word, or in deed;  
» and if ever it should happen to me to be  
» deceived in the opinions which I enounce,  
» I hope discretion will be employed in in-  
» terpreting them according to the rule of  
» my sentiments, for my submission to the  
» authority of the Church is complete, en-  
» tire, and universal ». Most admirable is  
this protest of Catholic faith, which when  
placed before the eyes of the Supreme Pa-  
stor by the friend to whom he wrote it,  
caused them to fill with tears. And this

protest, appropriately recorded by us upon the commemoration of his birth day, is a proof that in the heir and type of the hereditary Catholic firmness of Ireland, existed that same submission and resignation of mind, by which from the very first, the Apostle of that nation, S. Patrick, bound his new converts to respect for, and dependence upon, the Pontiff S. Celestine. Was not this the very sentiment which caused O'Connell to die in a land which to him was foreign? Was it not for this he encountered, despite his failing health, the toils of a long journey from his own Catholic country to Apostolic Rome, namely, that he might behold before him, personally venerate, hear with his ears, and kiss with his lips, the hereditary Majesty and Paternity of the successor of S. Peter, in the person of Pius IX, who in the space of a few months from his elevation to the Pontificate had already filled with his name, his deeds and his hopes, the most distant corners of Europe and the world.

Verily such close adherence to the unity of the Church can never be expected to ap-

pear in those Catholics whose life is not conformable to the Catholic profession. Dissonance between faith and practice, will break the bond itself of faith in the long run, if not at once. The deadly origin of so many heresies arose from nothing else than the immoral conduct of their founders and fosterers. For the most part the heads of these heresies had no other followers than the most idle and dissolute. When the individual has once broken the bond of unity by guilty discrepancy between his actions and the principles he professed, of necessity those principles cease to be comprehended in the experience of their beauty, and become, on the contrary, an odious burden upon the heart. Then, some material interests will not brook interference. An air of false freedom is breathed, and then it must needs follow that those holy principles must be set aside, trampled upon, blasphemed, and recklessly renounced. On the other hand no one feels drawn towards religious apostacy, who lives chastely and in the practice of the Christian virtues. Such an one rather feels within himself a necessity to maintain the

peace of his mind, as he enjoys the sweet calm of virtue.

Behold then in O'Connell a Catholic, who was a Catholic in so much as he was moral. His enemies have never been able to accuse him of a single disgraceful habit, nor of a single vice which would render less praiseworthy the idea of his Catholic personality. True it is, that misconduct reprobated is never a proof of falsity of principles, when the guilty parties themselves reprove it, and when it proceeds from totally different sources of guilt, namely from wicked and unbridled passions. But when the cause of the Faith is embellished, and irradiated by the effulgence of virtue, oh, then its very enemies must pay it veneration. Their weapons are rendered pointless before they strike it. And a citizen like O'Connell can fight God's battle in security.

By this we do not mean to say that O'Connell had never committed any thing for which he had cause to reprove himself, and to preserve during his life a dolorous remembrance. But it is one thing to fall

in a moment of blindness, and to do an act which, at the first re-opening of the mind, is detested and bewailed, as was the case with Peter, who in the language of the poet denied his Master at the gates of Hell; and it is another thing to lead a life of misconduct, as is the case with many of those who boast of their honesty as citizens and Christians. Nor was it entirely from cowardice that O'Connell was on occasions wanting to himself; for it was from an impetus of an overprovoked sentiment of honour, and as it were to defend himself from the hand of a wretch, sped on to insult him by a miserable political party, but whom O'Connell had the sorrow to see fall dead at his feet, in a momentary victory, in a duel ever afterwards detested. But from that moment to the end of his days, and setting aside that stain which he washed away with the tears of many years, (better far that others should not boast of such adventures) what a life was his, reproachless even before the eyes of his enemies? Ye statesmen, who aim at being public benefactors, never shall you be such in reality, until

you shall imitate the faith of this Irishman, a faith sincere because it was Roman, and which was effective just in proportion as it was conjoined with works of virtue. This in fact was the answer given to a great protestant controversialist who was satisfied in his own venerable person, with faith without works.

But was this Statesman deficient in answering even with his pen, the doubts, the errors, the absurdities, put forth by the opposite camp against his religion ? Ah ! it is indeed difficult, for the champions of civil rights to possess the knowledge and the will to be the bulwark of religious truth by the power of their talents. If they employ these in the matter, it is for the purpose of hiding their own religious convictions, if they have any, and of employing a mode of language, at which the unbeliever, the protestant, and the indifferent, will not feel offended, but even honoured. Not such was the behaviour of the great Irishman. He was emulous in his work, emulous precisely of the Christian Apologists before named, who

were the first to create, as it were, a new eloquence in defence of public religion, and who made their words resound in the crowded senate and forum. He was likewise an imitator of their scientific and literary eloquence, by means of those of his writings which powerfully defended the most sacred dogma of the Eucharist, which unveiled the barrenness of the faith of the Methodists, which made plain the prodigious fecundity of the Church in Great Britain and elsewhere, which recounted with an erudition incredible in a man engaged in civil affairs, the history of the Vulgate and other translations of the Bible, and which, above all, taught men, that apart from every question of falsity or pride, there was death, which none could avoid, and for which it was necessary for all men to keep themselves daily prepared.

He, however, who would form an adequate idea of O'Connell as a citizen eminently Catholic, must not figure him in that almost ideal arena, in which the battle is fought in the solitude of the study chamber, with weapons of erudition and with the

mute word entrusted to paper and to books. Observe, my friends, that which is sculptured on the marble which covers the heart of O'Connell, and regard it not as a symbol, nor as poetry, but as history registered in the proceedings of the British Parliament, as a true episode in the Catholic life of O'Connell. He is elected by the legitimate and willing votes of his countrymen to represent them. But at the moment when he is just on the point of passing the barrier which divides the spectators from the seats of the Members of Parliament, a functionary, dressed in legal garb, stops him with the words: « Here you cannot enter, there is no admittance for you, until you have taken the oath. O'Connell takes into his hand the formula of the required oath, and although he had so much desired his legal election for the good of his cause, and although others had done so much to procure his triumphant return, yet when he saw the improper terms of the oath: « No », he exclaimed « This oath cannot be taken by a Catholic Deputy ».

To this bold refusal, do not expect me

to put in contrast the conduct of those craven hearted Catholics, who either swear in the full terms of the oath in their cowardice, or swear nothing at all by reason of their unbelief, prompt equally to betray that which they swore, or to abuse all the public or private confidence so liberally placed in them. More noble parallels can be adduced for the Catholic citizen. The Acts of Christian Martyrdom, not of revolutions, furnish examples worthy the courage of O'Connell. When the heroes of the Faith, placed before the tyrants, or before a factious and cruel populace, heard the command given them to swear, as the custom was, in idolatrous superstition, either by the Gods, or by Fortune, or by the Genius of Cesar, they answered, « No », resolutely and bravely, as Basilides answered, as is recorded in the Acts of Leonides and Plutarch, « the Christian does not swear in this form ». And bending the head before the stroke, those brave men died; their minds being content beneath their panoply of purity, and without the shame of having extended their hands over sacrilegious fires, or of having polluted their tongues with

the words of a pagan oath. Sixteen or nineteen centuries after these glorious repudiations, which gained the victory over all human feelings, even over the love of life, I see them again reproduced at the bar of the British House of Parliament. For, O'Connell swears not; he will not swear what would be a denial of Catholic dogma. He will swear nothing which contradicts his religious belief. And thus it is that he, inviolate in heart and in his lips, remained meanwhile the amazement of all who could not but concede to his courage and loyalty the reward of being heard in a most vigorous oration, which he thereupon delivered in defence of Catholic rights, in order to obtain that the sanctuary of religious belief should be respected by the laws of the world.

But the faith of this man, who was the admiration of the greatest statesmen and of entire nations, was so great that he practised what he believed, and in order to do so, did not think it beneath him, to mix with the humblest people and to adopt the same exercises, as they do, of ordinary

piety. The moderns have invented a Christianity of non practisers. But the man who really believes, cannot, must not, restrain his faith in a species of apathy and inaction. Prayer, sacraments, the exterior acts of religion, are instituted for all men, even for those who despise every thing except themselves, and who, while they boast themselves to be maintainers or restorers of the dignity of man, and look with disdain on every act by which humanity maintains its union with heaven, are perhaps themselves the most simple and ignorant of men. No. This philosophy of a faith solely speculative, and averse to all practice of worship, albeit the general fashion of statesmen of our times, was not the fashion of the great Catholic of Ireland. Certain great men of modern society are ashamed to fulfil the duties even of annual confession and of Easter Communion; but O'Connell was most constant and devout in resorting to both these sources of divine comfort. Nay, so highly did he value both these Sacraments, that he esteemed it necessary to have with him frequently a minister of God, the depositary of the secrets of his

conscience, and this was the only grace which he earnestly solicited from the Holy See, namely that his Confessor might be allowed, whatever the diocese he reached in his journey, to hear his confession and give him absolution, without being obliged each time to obtain from the Ordinaries of each locality the necessary faculties.

The illustrious O'Connel did not allow his practice of religion to remain secret, after the fashion of some rich Catholics in high places, who keep their religion almost invisible, and who, if they do not altogether hide in their heart the little faith they possess, circumscribe its exercise to some squalid corner of their magnificent habitations. And the sweetest and most lovely devotion of which the Catholic Church can boast was that which, of all others, placed the piety of O'Connell in the strongest relief. For, He was devout to the tenderest extreme, and publicly professed his devotion to the august and holy Mother of Jesus Christ, of the dear and venerated Mother of the Heart which belongs to all the redeemed. Who amongst you has not read in these last few days, in the Catho-

lic newspapers, the memorials of this his filial and generous love for Mary?

It was the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1843, the triumph of the Virgin assumed into heaven. More than a hundred thousand Irishmen were assembled together, and many protestants also formed part of that political and national meeting. O'Connell, however, wished above all that the Divine Sacrifice should be celebrated in view of that immense multitude, and he was the first to shew by his example, with what devotion one ought to assist at the grandest work of God. Then this man, whose parliamentary eloquence enchanted the wisest men in Great Britain, putting aside all political and national business, began to treat of the solemnized mystery, and of the celestial and eternal glories of Our Lady, as well as of her maternal beneficence, and of her potent intercession, by which, though protestants deny it, she is the succour of all who are unhappy, the hope of sinners, the security of the just, and the joy of all hearts. No layman ever spoke so well to such multitudes concerning the Virgin, as then O'Con-

nell spoke to his countrymen. The Irish are indeed traditional venerated of Her. In the sixth century they sang in Her honour Litanies of praise and invocation, which later were enlarged and used in various forms throughout all the Church. When O' Connell had ceased speaking, tears flowed from the eyes of those who stood by, who in the immense multitude then present, recalled some of the more touching scenes of the middle ages. O' Connell then left to others the task of speaking on Irish affairs, and retired apart from the great assembly to recite the Rosary.

Let not worldly statemen smile at this conduct of the Catholic citizen, who, while orators spoke to the people on matters of popular interest, spoke meanwhile unto God through His Mother, and invoked, from on high, gifts and blessings for society on earth. O' Connell was not a Proudhon who blasphemously exclaimed that earth would never receive a blessing, until God disappeared from Heaven !

The Rosary, which once was the pledge, on the decks of the war ships in Lepanto,

of the most memorable victory ever gained by Catholics against the infidel, was well suited to appear in the hands of a citizen, who by means of bloodless justice, aimed at mitigating the hardships suffered by his brethren at the hands of one of the most glorious kingdoms in Europe. And this time also the Rosary triumphed.

In fact, several years before this occurred, O'Connell, who used to hope from the Blessed Virgin the favorable issue of his labours recited the Rosary, not before an Irish assembly, but in protestant and prejudiced London itself, upon that very day, when the House of Commons discussed the great Irish question, whether or no the portals of the British Parliament should be opened to Catholics. And it was to the Rosary, rather than to agitation or eloquence, that O'Connell used to attribute the achievement of that victory.

It is well for those kingdoms, wherein the citizen, when he would demand the fulfillment of his desires, presents himself with the Rosary in his hand, instead of the revolver or the musket. Then, no one need

fear those who guide the multitudes, and Catholic nations would obtain all their just rights, or at least the greater part of them, in peace.

And there is good reason for this. What would have been that great Irishman, O'Connell, if he had not been profoundly and entirely a Catholic citizen? O'Connell, without God, without the Virgin, would have been the most fanatical, the most terrible chieftain of revolted nationalities, ever recorded in our times. The man who spoke to the ear of an Ireland exasperated by three centuries of oppression; who held in his hand the hearts of eight millions of oppressed people, and who had in their cause himself undergone sentence and imprisonment; who could dispose of annual treasuries, and could direct at will an enormous associated body of his countrymen; who was in fact the king, as it were, of his people; believe it, such a man as this, had he not been a true and perfect Christian, who had subordinated the cause of his country to his religion, would have been capable of revenging, in the most sanguinary mode, the injuries received, and

he would have been to his adversaries, what the fierce Cromwell had been to the Irish, and to all the Catholics in England. Thanks, then, be offered to the Eternal, who in the epoch of revolutions, those horrid scourges of peoples and States, selected an Irishman, but one of the pure Roman faith, of inviolate conduct, of religious courage, and of tender devotion, to prove how it is possible to be a citizen Catholic and a Catholic citizen. Thanks be to God who made it known through O'Connell, that it is not from men like him, but from men who would banish religion from the world, that disorders are to be expected, as well as tumults and riots and all the evils, which for the last century, from the birth of O'Connell to the present day, have been accumulating upon the face of this miserable land of exile. It is only in this sense that we this day, near to O'Connell's heart, sing the Eucharistic hymn to God, upon the day sacred to His Mother, purer in whiteness than the snow (1).

(1) The 5<sup>th</sup> of August is the Feast of S. Maria *ad nives* (of the snow) in the Roman Calendar.

I do not presume, (and who would dare?) to place mere men, no matter how glorious they may be in the opinion and belief of the world, upon a level with those heroes of the Gospel, whom the Church reveres with the honors of the Altar. But, notwithstanding, if the contrast be not too fanciful, I may be pardoned for here relating a legend, upon good or bad grounds transmitted to us by Jordan of Saxony, and told by the historians of Augustine.

It was said that when the incomparable Doctor of Grace died, his heart was separated from his bosom by the great palpitations of superhuman love. In course of time or perhaps simultaneously with Augustine's death, during the Vandal persecution, this heart disappeared. More than five centuries afterwards, a bishop of Lyons, a fervid admirer of the Saint, prayed to be permitted to obtain some precious relic of him, and behold, an angel appeared to him in his dream, holding in his hand a vase of clear crystal of wonderful workmanship, encircled with gold, and resting on a golden foot, and inclosed in a case resplendent with pearls.

« Sigisbert, » said the Angel, « Sleepest thou? » Awake, and look upon this heart. God willeth not the perishing of an instrument of such sublime feelings, of a heart which was the habitation of inextinguisable love. Rise and take in gift what God enjoined me to present to thee, the heart, namely, of thy Augustine! He said and disappeared. At the sound of the spreading wings, at the surprise of the vanished vision, Sigisbert awaked, looked around, and upon the altar not far from him, beheld the vase and the heart which he had seen in the hand of the celestial messenger. Astonished at the fact, he prostrated himself before the Divine presence. The fame of this vision spread abroad through all the diocese of Lyons, and everywhere celebrations were held in honour of the extraordinary occurrence. But when the Te Deum was intoned, when the words of the hymn of Ambrosius, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, were heard resounding upon the air, the heart appeared to palpitate and to throb with its ancient and ever fresh love of the God, who lives in the Unity of the substance and in the Trinity of

persons. Moreover, every time the name of the august Trinity was pronounced, or some passage out of the fifteen books written upon it by the pen of the immortal African, was read before the heart of the vindicator of that great Mystery, that heart always moved as if in response to the amorous language of its faith.

But today, in this place, we look for no vision like that of Sigisbert. And at the echo of that song of gratitude which we are about to sing in honour of the Trinity in Unity, you do not expect to see the heart of O'Connell palpitate and move, as if to demonstrate that religion and piety, which animated him from his early youth until the last breath of his life.

Nor have we occasion to borrow from poetical figments, in order to do honour to the great man whose happy birthday we are here present to celebrate. History and truth, facts and realities, are all forthcoming to prove the great politician of Ireland to have been what is his chief fame, the Catholic citizen *par excellence*.

Glory then, and thanks for ever and ever

be unto God who gave him to us, who filled him with His Spirit, who aided him in his arduous enterprises, who crowned with the desired success the endurance and valour of the courageous believer. *Te Deum laudamus, Te Dominum confitemur!*

And thou generous soul ! from the secret regions of thy eternity , respond thyself to our commemoration. If earthly needs can be made known to thee amid the Divine light, observe well the sad fortunes which have befallen Catholic nations from the day when thou didst leave this world as it were in prey to a blind infatuation, a period of eight and twenty years, a period as long as that spent by thee in pleading for Ireland and for all the Catholics under English dominion. If in that land some fruit is gathered, day by day, from thy laborious achievements, alas! mark attentively that which happens everywhere else. Look, and pray to the fountain of supreme justice, that as the impious from the time of thy departure have tried to unconsecrate society, so likewise we may find among the nations some inheritor of thy Catholic sentiments, sentiments which

were sound, overflowing, and most ardent, who will restore religion to the midst of social life. And if this be done, then together with religion will return peace, causing the prosperity of the nations to flourish, and every thing of time will conduce to the supreme end of human existence, eternal salvation, the divine happiness of all human generations, which are already weary of their crimes and their misfortunes.



IMPRIMATUR

P. Fr. Vincentius M. Gatti O. P.

S. P. A. Magister.



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